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Articles in Today's Clips

Friday, September 5, 2008

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September 4, 2008

Family Fun Ride on Sept. 14

Karmel Puzzuoli
Reader Submitted

The Calhoun Child Abuse/Neglect Prevention Council (CAN Council) will offer families an afternoon of family fun and positive parenting information at its Family Fun Ride on Sunday, September 14, 2008 from 2-4 p.m. at Fell Park in Urbandale.

Families with young children are encouraged to attend and bring bicycles to ride around the beautiful tree-lined bike path at Fell Park. Participants will be provided complimentary hot dogs, ice cream, goodie bags, and will be entered into a drawing to win either a girls' or boys' bicycle.

"There are over 3,000 reports of child abuse reported in Calhoun County every year," said Karmel Puzzuoli, CAN Council coordinator. "And there were several deaths of children in child abuse cases in 2007. The Board of Directors determined that it was time to reach out to families, parents and caregivers, and their idea of a Family Fun Ride is a spectacular idea and I encourage families to come check it out."

Fell Park is located at the end of Willard Street off of M-37, near the intersection of Michigan and Helmer.

More information is available on the CAN Council website: calhounprevention.org.

The Council has been operating in Battle Creek since 1977. It is the designated child abuse prevention organization in Calhoun County by the Michigan Children's Trust Fund, and sponsors many special awareness activities to increase the public's knowledge of child abuse and neglect during the year. Persons interested in more information about child abuse prevention, volunteering for the Council or donating to the cause of child abuse and neglect, please call (269) 962-2562 or contact us via our website.



September 5, 2008

Fowlerville parents escape child abuse charges

9/5/08 - It appears as though a Fowlerville couple will not face child abuse charges after an August incident in which a four-week-old baby was found in a car with a pacifier taped onto its mouth. State Police made the discovery during a routine traffic stop. The baby was found lying on the car's back seat, unrestrained, with electrical tape over both cheeks. The 19 year old father and 18 year old mother, who are both Fowlerville residents, said they had used the tape because the baby kept spitting out the pacifier. Child Protective Services placed the baby in the custody of grandparents. Livingston County Prosecutor David Morse says his office will not seek a neglect and abuse petition in juvenile court against the parents because the petition would likely not be authorized anyway since the family is cooperating with the Michigan Department of Human Services. Morse says state officials are working with the couple and they are taking parenting classes. He also noted that the child was examined and there was "no evidence of abuse". (JM)

LIVINGSTON DAILY.COM

September 5, 2008

Abuse charges avoided

By Lisa Roose-Church
DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

A young couple whose 4-week-old son was found by police with a pacifier taped to his mouth will not face child abuse charges, Livingston County's top prosecutor said Thursday.

Prosecutor David Morse said he also has decided not seek a neglect and abuse petition in Livingston County Circuit Court's juvenile division against the parents because the petition most likely would not be authorized since the family is "fully cooperating" with the Michigan Department of Human Services.

DHS is working with the couple — a 19-year-old male and an 18-year-old woman, both of Fowlerville — about how to become better parents, including having the couple attend parenting classes.

"There is no crime that fits these circumstances," Morse explained.

Michigan State Police said they stopped the couple during a routine traffic stop for a defective equipment violation Aug. 13 near Fowlerville Road and Interstate 96 in the Fowlerville area.

The father reportedly got out of the car as if to distract officers, who noticed the car was very hot and had no air conditioning.

Trooper Rene Gonzalez of the Lansing post also observed the infant "unsecured in the rear seat of the vehicle" with the pacifier held into his mouth with adhesive tape strapped across both cheeks.

The child, whom the county's Child Protective Services office placed into the custody of his grandparents, was examined by a physician and there was "no evidence of abuse," Morse said.

Morse said his office considered filing second-degree child abuse charges. However, state law calls for the prosecutor to prove that the person knowingly or intentionally commits an act that is likely to cause physical harm or mental harm.

"While in this instance it's possible serious physical harm might have happened," Morse explained, "we couldn't show it was likely.

"Even though it wasn't a crime, it was incredibly bad judgment in how to care for a child," he said. "It is an illustration of why people that young should not be having children."

Contact Daily Press & Argus reporter Lisa Roose-Church at (517) 552-2846 or at lrchurch@gannett.com.



State police investigate death of Albee Township 3-month-old

Posted by The Saginaw News September 04, 2008 23:10PM

State police are investigating the Aug. 29 death of a 3-month-old child in Albee Township.

Detective Sgt. Dennis Proulx of the Bridgeport post would not comment on the active case other than to say investigators are awaiting toxicology reports and the medical examiner's autopsy report.

"We expect to see those results within a few weeks," Proulx said.

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WNEM.com

Saginaw Township Dad Charged In Baby's Death

Police Say Four-Month-Old Died From Internal Injuries

POSTED: 12:01 pm EDT September 5, 2008

UPDATED: 1:14 pm EDT September 5, 2008

SAGINAW TOWNSHIP, Mich. -- Saginaw County prosecutors have charged the father of a 4-month-old with first-degree murder and child abuse.

Scott Perreault, 29, will be arraigned Friday after police said he played a role the girl's death.

On Wednesday, police received a call from a residence at South Colony Apartments that the baby was having difficulty breathing. Later, medical personnel said internal injuries to the child led to the breathing troubles.

The 4-month-old died Thursday afternoon.

Perreault is also awaiting trial for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated -- third offense.

Stay tuned to TV5 for more information as it becomes available.

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[Manistee County DHS to host Voter Registration Fair](#)

... part of the Manistee County Department of Human Services' continuing efforts to provide needed and valued services to community residents, this local **DHS** office will hold a Voter Registration Fair to help register **Michigan** voters. ...

[Manistee News Advocate/news/local... - http://www.pioneergroup.com/](#)

Note: This news site requires paid subscription to read the remainder of this story.

County department buildings put on lockdown

By Staff reports

The Holland Sentinel

Posted Sep 04, 2008 @ 09:58 PM

Allegan County, MI — Police cleared the scene at a lockdown at the Allegan County Department of Human Services north p.m. Thursday, Sept. 4.

An Allegan County dispatcher said department buildings, located at 3255 122nd Ave., were locked down, including the court after a call came in to central dispatch around 11:05 a.m. that a man inside the building said he had a gun.

The call came from a child protective services worker who said the man approached a volunteer and asked for a free soda,

The caller said that when the volunteer did not give the man a beverage, he told her he had a gun, then disappeared.

Police did not find the man and cleared the scene at about 12:36 p.m., the dispatcher said.

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September 5, 2008

United Way sets 'aggressive' goal

Justin A. Hinkley
The Enquirer

United Way officials are calling the campaign to raise \$5.1 million in just over two months "aggressive."

The United Way of Greater Battle Creek kicked off its 2008 Community Solutions Campaign with a luncheon Thursday. It hopes to meet the \$5.1 million goal by Nov. 13.

The downed economy makes daily living more expensive, which means the needs of the community are greater. It also means some folks may be too cash-strapped to donate. That's why United Way has to work hard to reach its goal, said spokeswoman Teresa Osborne.

"We know we're gonna be faced with a challenge," Osborne said. "We're not asking the people already donating to donate more, but if more people can help, we can meet that goal."

In 2007, United Way raised \$5,106,930, helped along by a record-setting \$2.7 million donation from Kellogg Co., its employees and retirees.

United Way helps fund more than 30 local nonprofits that run more than 50 programs, including the Food Bank of South Central Michigan and 211, the all-inclusive resource call center.

In a press release Thursday, the organization said requests for food assistance was the number-one need through 2007 and into 2008.

But in this economy, more needs will arise, Osborne said.

"Right now, people are choosing between more gas for their car and their prescription medicine," she said. "People are making tough choices out there and need help."

Justin A. Hinkley can be reached at 966-0698 or jhinkley@battlecr.gannett.com.



K.A.I.R. aims to keep community cupboards full

By Josh Perttunen
Editor

KALKASKA - The current economic climate of our country is a topic on the tips of many Americans' tongues. Daily pow-wows around the watercooler now prominently feature discussions on the lack of jobs and the rising price of gas - and everything else that goes along with it.

The Kalkaska Area Interfaith Resources (K.A.I.R) organization is doing all they can to keep up with Kalkaska County's need.

"The rising price of gas has increased the number of people asking for help," said K.A.I.R. director Debbie Harmon. "We started out helping a couple hundred people a month and now we're getting 600 to 700 people asking for help."

The cost of gas is forcing people to make difficult choices said volunteer Marilyn Coville.

"It's getting so that if people have to buy gas to get to and from work and appointments, they can't buy as much food," she said.

The K.A.I.R.-operated food pantry provides no-questions-asked assistance to anyone claiming their shelves are in danger of going bare. They would like to give more, according to Harmon; but, currently, K.A.I.R. is only able to allot those in need with a three to four day's supply of food.

This organization also tries to help with other bills when they threaten to push wallets to their breaking points. For this service, the only requirement is that people pay a visit to the Department of Human Services for an eligibility screening; the K.A.I.R. organization is unable to do screenings of its own. Regardless of the findings, K.A.I.R tries to work with people from that point forward.

"Most of the people we see are living on the absolute limit of their income," Harmon said. "They can't handle any unexpected expenses such as their vehicle breaking down, family members or themselves getting sick or broken down heaters."

K.A.I.R.'s food pantry is kept afloat by donations from churches and citizens, the money made from its adjoining thrift store and grant money. The organization has to scramble to do all that it can with its modest funds.

Ê "We try to match the money we do have to what the community actually needs," Harmon said.

Even tighter times could be on the horizon - with home heating costs set to figure into the mix as soon as the weather turns cold. February is the month that sees the largest spike in need.

"In response to rising gas prices, we're just going to do what we can do," Harmon said. "We're going to make the best use we can of what we have. We'll give until we can't give anymore."

In order to increase their ability to give, K.A.I.R. is having a food drive on Sept. 11, in conjunction with the United Way of Northwest Michigan's Day of Caring. Volunteers will set up shop from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at four local grocery stores in order to accept food donations. The stores involved in this drive are the Northland Food and Family Center, Glen's Market, Save-A-Lot and the Alden Village Market.

Ê "Last year, volunteers were sitting in the parking lots, near the trucks," Coville said. "This year, they'll be next to the doors, handing out slips with information on the food products they are looking for."

The dietary staples K.A.I.R. will be seeking in this drive include soups, cereals, peanut butter and jelly, macaroni and cheese, canned fruit and vegetables, canned milk and spaghetti noodles and sauce.

Food donations can be dropped off ahead of time at the food pantry and volunteers are always needed, Coville said. Anyone wishing to volunteer may contact her at 231-369-2623.

"One of the nice things is when people donate overabundance from their gardens," Harmon said.

There will also be a spaghetti dinner fundraiser on Sept. 11. The event will be held at the Commission on Aging from 5 to 7 p.m., and will be hosted by the People's Church. All proceeds will go to K.A.I.R. and tickets will be available at the door.

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http://www.leaderandkalkaskian.com/stories/090308/loc_lk02.shtml



Forum: Growing poverty requires response

By SHARON PARKS

September 05, 2008 12:00 am

In northern Michigan today, more families are struggling to put food on their tables and lacking basic necessities than any time in the past 15 years.

That's the conclusion of a new U.S. Census Bureau report, which found that the poverty rate in our state has jumped to 14 percent in 2007, climbing to levels we haven't seen since recessions in the early 1980s and early 1990s. The situation is especially dire for children, 19 percent of whom, or nearly one in five, live in poverty.

In Grand Traverse County, 7,200 people live in poverty, including more than 1,600 children.

That's enough people to fill the Milliken Auditorium 18 times.

The situation has gone from bad to worse. Michigan's unemployment rate is the highest in the country, rising from 7.2 percent to 8.5 percent over the past year, and food pantries and other emergency food sites report growing demand and short supplies.

A record 1.3 million people in Michigan -- nearly one in every eight -- currently receive Food Assistance, formerly called Food Stamps. In Grand Traverse County, 4,856 households rely on the program.

As alarming as these numbers are, there are steps we can take to ease suffering and spur economic growth. In fact, economists say that the surest way to help the economy is to help those most in need.

"If you're somebody who lives paycheck to paycheck, you're more likely to spend that extra dollar," said Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke, commenting earlier this year on the effectiveness of directing funds to low-income people as an economic stimulus tool.

When Congress returns this month it should heed Bernanke's words and quickly pass another economic stimulus bill providing extra weeks of jobless benefits for workers in high-unemployment states like Michigan, a temporary increase in Food Assistance for low-income families and extra help for poor families facing skyrocketing heating bills this winter.

These measures will not only jump-start the economy, they will help needy families in northern Michigan.

For example, despite soaring grocery prices, the average Food Assistance benefit is still only about \$1 per person per meal. And poor families are facing a projected 25 percent increase in home heating costs this winter.

In Lansing, state leaders should expand the new state Earned Income Tax Credit, which rewards work for lower-income families. The first credits will be available when the 2008 tax returns are filed.

For children in families where parents cannot work or cannot find employment, the level of support must rise. The Family Independence Program has been frozen at 1990 levels with the first, small across-the-board increase set for Oct. 1.

Forum: Growing poverty requires response

Inflation has stripped this program of most of its buying power and it simply must increase to pull about 70,000 of our poorest households out of desperate circumstances.

These issues must be at the top of our leaders' agendas. We owe it to the 1,600 children and their families in the Traverse City area who are living in poverty.

About the author: Sharon Parks is president and CEO of the Michigan League for Human Services, a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group for low-income citizens.

About the forum: The forum is a periodic column of opinion written by Record-Eagle readers in their areas of interest or expertise. Submissions of 500 words or less may be made by e-mailing letters@record-eagle.com. Please include biographical information and a photo.

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Photos



Sharon Park

www.michigan.gov
(To Print: use your browser's print function)

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Michigan leads the Midwest in offering more purchasing opportunities for farmer's markets

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Sept. 5, 2008

At farmer's markets across the state, Michigan food assistance recipients can use their benefits to obtain farm fresh, nutrient dense fruits and vegetables. Compared to other Midwest states, Michigan leads with 18 farm markets accepting Bridge Card electronic benefits.

Michigan's Food Assistance Program provides federal Food Stamp dollars to low-income families and individuals to supplement their food purchasing power and prevent hunger. In comparison to Michigan, Ohio has seven participating markets; Illinois has five; and Wisconsin has four.

Michigan's participating markets can be found from the Eastern Market in Detroit to Sweetwater Local Foods Market in Montague and even into the Upper Peninsula with farmer's markets in Marquette and Sault Ste. Marie. [A list of all 18 locations is available on our Web site at this link.](#)

"Farmers markets are a good option for people to spend their food assistance dollars on healthful fresh fruits and vegetables," DHS Director Ismael Ahmed said. "Adults and children benefit from the nutrition of fresh produce."

An increasing number of Michigan residents rely on the Food Assistance Program. In June 2008, a total of 602,323 households received food assistance. More than 1.2 million individuals receive an average of about \$100 a month. The program brings federal dollars into the local economy. For every \$5 in benefits provided by federal dollars, there is an additional \$9.20 in economic activity in the local community.

"In fact, for every dollar spent locally on fresh fruits and vegetables, three to seven different local businesses are impacted before that dollar leaves the local economy," said Don Koivisto, MDA Director. "If every Michigan household spends just \$10 per week of their current grocery budget on local foods, we'd keep more than \$37 million each week circulating within our state."

For more information, please consult the DHS Web site at www.michigan.gov/foodstamps

For additional information on farmers markets, please visit <http://www.farmersmarkets.msu.edu>

Related Documents

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